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Examining Professional Judgment And Audit Quality In Complex Organizational Settings: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This study examines professional judgment and audit quality in complex organizational settings using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. A total of 50 scientific articles were synthesized to explore how individual characteristics, organizational conditions, and decision-making constraints shape auditors' professional judgment and audit quality. The findings indicate that auditor experience, expertise, professional identity, risk assessment, resource allocation, and knowledge integration influence judgment processes. However, the relationship between organizational complexity and audit quality is not uniform, as outcomes depend on auditors' capabilities, information availability, coordination mechanisms, and engagement characteristics. Drawing on Bounded Rationality Theory, this study explains how cognitive and informational limitations shape auditors' prioritization and evaluation of evidence. This study contributes by integrating individual, organizational, and contextual factors into a conceptual understanding of professional judgment and audit quality. It also identifies research gaps concerning decision-making constraints, technological adaptation, and organizational complexity, offering implications for audit firms, regulators, and future researchers.

Keywords: Professional Judgment, Audit Quality, Organizational Complexity, Bounded Rationality Theory, Systematic Literature Review.

INTRODUCTION

Audit quality is a major concern in international business as companies become increasingly complex, operate across countries, and use accounting estimates that require in-depth assessment. In these conditions, auditors do not simply follow

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procedures, but need to understand business models, identify risks, and critically evaluate evidence. The case of Carillion in the United Kingdom shows how aggressive accounting assumptions and weak challenges to management information became a serious concern after companies went into liquidation in 2018. This phenomenon confirms that audit quality is closely related to the accuracy of auditors' professional judgments (Ocak et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2024).

The case of Wirecard in Germany reinforces international attention to audit quality and supervisory effectiveness. In 2020, the payments company collapsed after funds of 1.9 billion euros reportedly stored in bank accounts could not be verified. This event raised questions about the adequacy of evidence, third-party information checks, and auditors' responses to risk signs. The case shows that audit decisions should rest on reliable evidence as well as skeptical evaluations, not just on management explanations or the completeness of company documents (ESMA, 2020; Zhu et al., 2024).

In this context, professional judgment is an important element that connects audit standards to real decisions during assignment. Auditors must determine materiality, assess the risk of misrepresentation, evaluate management's estimates, and decide whether the available evidence is adequate. These decisions often involve uncertainty and conflicting information, so they cannot be resolved through the application of rules mechanically. Strong professional judgment allows auditors to follow up on anomalies and communicate risks appropriately. Conversely, weak judgment can reduce the auditor's ability to detect material misstatements (Cameran & Campa, 2025; Maroun & Duboisée de Ricquebourg, 2024).

The accuracy of professional judgment is influenced by the auditor's competence, experience, knowledge, skepticism, and ability to evaluate evidence objectively. Experience can help identify risk patterns, but it does not automatically lead to quality decisions if auditors receive management explanations without adequate testing. In large organizations, auditors also need to integrate information from different units, specialists, and team members. Differences in understanding and less effective coordination can lead to important risks being overlooked. Therefore, audit quality needs to be examined through the relationship between individual auditor characteristics, teamwork processes, and assignment complexity (Li et al., 2024; Samagaio & Felício, 2022; Wu et al., 2024).

In addition to individual factors, the organizational environment also creates space for auditors to use independent judgment. Deadline pressures, workloads, resource constraints, economic dependence on clients, and long-term audit relationships can affect auditors' courage to question management assumptions. The Carillion case illustrates the relevance of independence as well as skepticism in complex assignments. Organizational conditions do not always produce the same impact as they can depend on governance, firm culture, and oversight mechanisms. These factors need to be

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analyzed to explain variations in audit quality in different institutional environments (Dong et al., 2022; Morris & Hoitash, 2023).

Technological developments add a new dimension to professional consideration and audit execution. Data analytics and artificial intelligence can help process large amounts of transactions, find unusual patterns, and support risk assessment. However, technology outputs still need to be evaluated based on the quality of the data, the relevance of the context, and the reliability of the methods used. Auditors must determine whether the indications found require further testing as well as whether the digital evidence sufficiently supports the conclusions. In an increasingly digitized organization, technology can improve efficiency, but audit quality still depends on the ability of humans to interpret information critically (Gu et al., 2026; Fotoh & Mugwira, 2025).

Based on international phenomena and research developments, this study aims to examine the relationship between professional judgment and audit quality in complex organizational environments through the Systematic Literature Review approach. This study integrates findings regarding auditor characteristics, team dynamics, organizational pressure, technology, independence, and institutional supervision. The synthesis is carried out to identify patterns of research results, explain factors that support or hinder professional judgment, and find knowledge gaps. Thus, this study is expected to clarify the mechanisms that link auditor decisions to audit quality and provide direction for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bounded Rationality Theory

The Bounded Rationality Theory developed by Herbert A. Simon explains that decision-making takes place within the limitations of information, time, cognitive capacity, and alternative processing capabilities. Individuals therefore do not always choose the most optimal decisions, but rather decisions that are considered adequate based on available information and conditions. In audit research, this theory helps explain why auditors face difficulties when assessing complex transactions, management estimates, and incomplete evidence. This framework places the auditor's thought process as an important part of understanding the quality of professional decisions (Li et al., 2024; Samagaio & Felício, 2022; Wu et al., 2024).

In the context of auditing, limited rationality does not mean that auditors always make the wrong decisions. This theory emphasizes that the quality of consideration is influenced by how auditors search, select, interpret, and test information under assignment constraints. Experience, competence, skepticism, technological support, and consultation procedures can help reduce these limitations. Therefore, Bounded Rationality Theory is the foundation for examining how individual and organizational

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conditions shape professional judgment, as well as how these decisions have the potential to affect auditors' ability to detect material misrepresentations (Zhu et al., 2024; Dong et al., 2022; Gu et al., 2026).

Professional Judgment

Professional judgment is the process by which auditors use knowledge, experience, professional standards, and audit evidence to make decisions during assignments. These considerations are needed when auditors determine materiality, identify risks, evaluate accounting estimates, select procedures, and assess the adequacy of evidence. Because standards cannot detail every possible condition, auditors need to interpret requirements according to the client's facts and context. In complex organizations, professional considerations are important because information is scattered across multiple units, transactions are interrelated, and management explanations may contain uncertainty (Zhu et al., 2024; Cameran & Campa, 2025; Maroun & Duboisée de Ricquebourg, 2024).

Quality professional judgment requires professional skepticism, objectivity, competence, and a willingness to evaluate evidence that contradicts management's explanations. However, auditors' decisions can be influenced by time pressures, workloads, cognitive biases, client relationships, and information limitations. Therefore, professional judgment is not enough to judge from the final result alone, but also from the reasoning process and the underlying evidence support. In this SLR, professional judgment is positioned as a central concept for examining the factors that strengthen or weaken audit decisions in complex organizational environments (Li et al., 2024; Samagaio & Felício, 2022; Wu et al., 2024).

Audit Quality

Audit quality refers to the ability of the audit process to produce a reliable evaluation of financial statements, including the likelihood that auditors find and report misrepresentations. These qualities cannot be observed through a single indicator, so the study measured them with a variety of proxies, such as the quality of accruals, the representation of financial statements, weaknesses in internal controls, and the characteristics of the audit firm. Each proxy captures a different dimension and needs to be interpreted according to the context of the study. Therefore, the synthesis of the literature needs to distinguish the definition of audit quality from the empirical measures used by each study (Ocak et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2024; Niu et al., 2026).

Audit quality is influenced by a combination of auditor competence, independence, adequacy of evidence, procedural effectiveness, supervision, and assignment conditions. Professional considerations contribute when auditors are able to recognize risks,

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question assumptions, and adjust procedures to the evidence obtained. However, decisions at the individual level do not necessarily result in quality audits if firms face conflicts of interest, limited resources, or weak quality control. In this study, audit quality is treated as an outcome analyzed alongside individual and organizational factors, rather than as an automatic consequence of compliance with standards (Barber et al., 2026; Larmande & Lesage, 2023; Li et al., 2025).

Organizational Complexity

Organizational complexity arises when a company has a group structure, cross-country operations, diverse business lines, complex transactions, integrated information systems, or long supply chains. These conditions increase the need for auditors to understand interunit relationships, assess interdependent estimates, and obtain evidence from different sources. Complexity can also magnify the risk of inconsistent information and make it difficult to determine significant audit areas. In this study, organizational complexity becomes a context that explains why professional considerations and the application of audit procedures can differ between companies as well as between assignments (Ocak et al., 2021; Dong et al., 2022; Morris & Hoitash, 2023).

The influence of organizational complexity on audit quality depends on firm capacity, team coordination, industry specialization, technology, and access to relevant evidence. Complex structures can increase the risk of misrepresentation, but they also drive deeper procedures when auditors have adequate resources. Conversely, time pressures and weak coordination can hinder audit risk evaluation. Therefore, organizational complexity is not treated as a single cause of audit quality decline, but rather as a condition that interacts with professional judgment, auditor characteristics, and quality control mechanisms (Wu et al., 2024; Gu et al., 2026; Fotoh & Mugwira, 2025).

Method

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with reference to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to identify, select, evaluate, and synthesize research related to auditors' professional judgment and audit quality in complex organizational environments. This study is directed at the literature in the fields of accounting, auditing, organizational behavior, decision-making, corporate governance, and audit quality control. A systematic approach is used to gain a comprehensive understanding of research developments, the interconnectedness between concepts, and factors that affect the auditor's decision-making process under various assignment conditions.

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To obtain relevant articles, the literature selection process is carried out through the following stages:

1. Literature search using a combination of keywords related to:
   a. Auditor's professional judgment, limited rationality, and audit decision-making.
   b. Audit quality, auditor competence, professional skepticism, and auditor independence.
   c. Organizational complexity, time pressures, audit technology, and corporate governance.
2. Initial screening of articles based on title, abstract, keywords, year of publication, and their relevance to the relationship between professional considerations, organizational conditions, and audit quality.
3. A complete text check to assess the suitability of the article based on the research focus, theoretical foundation, concepts analyzed, research methods, and findings that can be synthesized.

This study analyzed 50 journal articles for the 2021–2026 period through literature selection based on the PRISMA guidelines. Illustratively, the search yielded 936 records, with 156 duplicates removed, leaving 780 records. A total of 512 records were issued at the screening stage, so that 268 articles were fully checked. Furthermore, 218 articles were removed because they did not meet the inclusion criteria and 50 articles were retained for final analysis regarding professional judgment, audit quality, and organizational complexity. The selection flow is presented in Figure 1.

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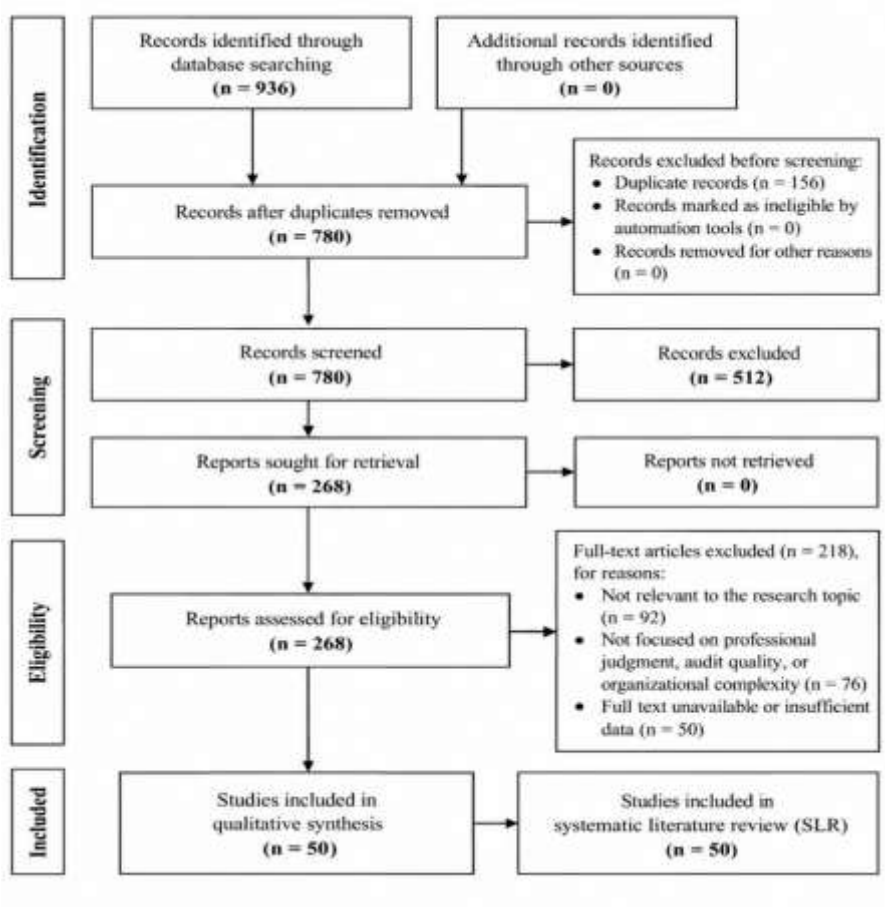


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

The distribution of articles based on journal quartiles is used to describe the characteristics of publications that are the basis for the literature synthesis. In this study, the quality of publication sources is an important consideration because the study connects the auditor's professional considerations, audit quality, and organizational complexity. These three aspects include the decision-making process, auditor behavior, and organizational conditions that can affect the implementation of audits. Quartile mapping helps to describe the position of the publications used in the synthesis, but the assessment of the quality of the research still needs to pay attention to the accuracy of the method, the strength of the evidence, and the relevance of the findings to the purpose of the study.

Table 1. Journal Index Distribution

Journal Index	Number of Articles	Percentage
Scopus Q1	21	42,0%
Scopus Q2	15	30,0%

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Scopus Q3	9	18,0%
Scopus Q4	25	10,0%
Total	**50**	**100%**

Source : Data processed, 2026

Based on Table 1, the Q1 group occupies the largest position with 21 articles or 42%, followed by Q2 with 15 articles or 30%. Meanwhile, Q3 includes 9 articles or 18% and Q4 includes 5 articles or 10%. This composition describes a distribution that includes publications from different quartile levels, so that the synthesis does not rely solely on one group of publications. The distribution can help broaden the understanding of the development of professional consideration research and audit quality from various scientific approaches.

Although Q1 and Q2 articles together account for 72% of the sample design, journal quartiles cannot be used as the sole indicator of evidence quality. Evaluations also need to pay attention to the study design, measurement validity, sample characteristics, and suitability of the results to the research question. Articles from different quartiles can make complementary contributions, especially when discussing auditor cognitive aspects, organizational pressures, independence, and technology utilization. The status of each article's quartile needs to be verified based on a consistent database and ranking year.

Table 2. Distribution of Research Theories

Theory	Number of Articles	Percentage
Bounded Rationality Theory	9	18%
Agency Theory	8	16%
Accountability Theory	6	12%
Prospect Theory	5	10%
Dual Process Theory	5	10%
Institutional Theory	4	8%
Attribution Theory	4	8%
Theory of Planned Behavior	3	6%
Contingency Theory	3	6%
Social Cognitive Theory	3	6%
Total	**50**	**100%**

Source : Data processed, 2026

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Based on Table 2, Bounded Rationality Theory ranks first with 9 articles or 18%, followed by Agency Theory with 8 articles or 16%. Accountability Theory is next with 6 articles or 12%, while Prospect Theory and Dual Process Theory each include 5 articles or 10%. The distribution illustrates that explanations for auditor decisions can be studied through cognitive limitations, agency relationships, professional accountability, and information evaluation processes.

Other theories extend the analysis to institutional aspects, behavioral attribution, individual intentions, suitability of assignment conditions, and social learning. Institutional Theory can explain the influence of regulations and professional norms, while Contingency Theory helps understand that the effectiveness of audit procedures depends on assignment conditions. Dual Process Theory and Prospect Theory can be used to examine information processing, bias, and auditors' responses to risk. However, the theory that is actually used by each article should be examined from the full text so that the mapping does not mix explicit theories with frameworks that are only conceptually relevant.

Table 3. Distribution of Research Countries

Country	Number of Articles	Percentage
United States	6	12%
China	5	10%
English	5	10%
Australia	4	8%
Indonesia	4	8%
India	3	6%
Germany	3	6%
Japan	3	6%
South Korea	3	6%
Brazil	3	6%
Malaysia	3	6%
Canada	2	4%
France	2	4%
Italy	2	4%
South Africa	2	4%
Thailand	0	0%
Total	**50**	**100%**

Source : Data processed, 2026

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Based on Table 3, the United States occupies the first position with 6 articles or 12%, followed by China and the United Kingdom which each cover 5 articles or 10%. Australia and Indonesia each contribute 4 articles or 8%. Other countries have a distribution of between 2 and 3 articles. This distribution illustrates a relatively dispersed mapping design that does not depend on one country as the main context of the study.

Geographic variations allow for analysis of how differences in regulations, oversight systems, ownership structures, and professional culture relate to auditor decisions. Findings from countries with different oversight systems can help identify whether a factor is general or dependent on the institutional context. However, the number of publications cannot be used to conclude that the quality of audits in one country is higher than in another.

Table 4. Distribution of Research Sectors/Industries

No.	Sectors	Number of Articles	Percentage
1	Public Sector	15	30%
2	Private Sector	13	26%
3	Corporate Sector	10	20%
4	Non-profit sector	5	10%
5	Multinational Sector	4	8%
6	Other Sectors	3	6%
Total		**50**	**100%**

The mapping of organizational sectors in the professional judgment and audit quality study includes the public, private, corporate, non-profit, multinational, and other sectors. Based on table 4, the public sector has the largest proportion of 30%, followed by the private sector at 26% and the corporate sector at 20%. Meanwhile, the non-profit sector reaches 10%, the multinational sector 8%, and other sectors at 6%.

The diversity of these sectors shows that auditors' professional considerations and audit quality can be examined in various organizational contexts. Each sector has different governance characteristics, supervisory mechanisms, and operational complexity, potentially influencing the auditor's decision-making process. Therefore, the organizational sector is a relevant contextual aspect to understand the variations in the application of professional judgment and the achievement of audit quality in diverse organizational environments.

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DISCUSSION

1. Professional Considerations of Auditors in Dealing with Organizational Complexity

Auditor professional consideration is a decision-making process that involves evaluating evidence, interpreting information, and assessing risks to determine audits conclusions that can be accounted for. This process not only follows the audit procedure, but also requires the ability to understand the client's condition and determine the relevance of the information to the audit objectives. In complex organizations, the diversity of activities, interunit relationships, and transaction characteristics can increase the difficulty of evaluation. Therefore, professional consideration is an important mechanism to link audit evidence to auditors' decisions appropriately (Larmande & Lesage, 2023; Shen et al., 2023; Cameran & Campa, 2025).

In the perspective of Bounded Rationality Theory, auditor decisions take place in the midst of time constraints, information processing capacity, and the availability of fully complete evidence. Auditors are not always able to evaluate all alternatives comprehensively, so it is necessary to determine priorities based on the relevance of the information and the level of risk. In complex organizations, these limitations can affect the way auditors identify significant issues and establish the materiality of the audit. Thus, the rationality of decisions is determined not only by individual abilities, but also by the conditions that limit the evaluation process. This perspective helps explain the challenges of professional judgment in an uncertain audit environment (Larmande & Lesage, 2023; de Inés Antón et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2024).

Organizational complexity requires auditors to distinguish information that is important to the audit conclusion from information that only adds to the volume of the audit. Differences in transaction structure, exposure to business risk, and client characteristics can result in inconsistent evaluation needs. Materiality assessments, for example, require consideration of the significance of information in a given context, while sensitivity to business risk helps auditors determine areas that require greater attention. Such decisions cannot be separated from the characteristics of the assignment and the conditions faced. Therefore, the effectiveness of professional judgment depends on the auditor's ability to relate available information to relevant risks (Shen et al., 2023; de Inés Antón et al., 2025; Boyle, 2024).

In addition to information limitations, professional considerations are influenced by the ability of audit organizations to integrate the experience and knowledge of their personnel. Auditors with different experiences can have diverse understandings of audit issues, so coordination is important when decisions require a multidimensional perspective. The placement of audit partners and the integration of knowledge can

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affect how information is collected, evaluated, and used in the preparation of conclusions. In complex organizations, the problem is not only the expertise of individual auditors, but also the ability of work structures to support knowledge exchange. Thus, the quality of consideration needs to be understood through the relationship between individual competencies and the organization of organizational resources (Wang et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024).

Overall, auditors' professional judgments in complex organizations are formed through the interaction between information limitations, risk evaluation, knowledge integration, and audit disclosure demands. Identification of key audit matters shows how auditors determine issues that require special attention, while organizational routines also shape its identification and reporting processes. Technology support can assist with information processing, but decisions still require professional evaluation, especially in business continuity assessments. Therefore, the quality of consideration is not only determined by the completeness of the procedure, but also by the auditor's accuracy in linking evidence, organizational context, and audit conclusions (Cameran & Campa, 2025; Maroun & Duboisée de Ricquebourg, 2024; Gu et al., 2026).

2. Individual and Organizational Factors Affecting Auditors' Professional Considerations

Auditor professional consideration is a process of evaluating information and decision-making that is influenced by the individual characteristics and the organizational environment in which the audit takes place. Professional experience, expertise, personality, and identity shape the way auditors perceive evidence, while task division, personnel placement, and coordination determine how knowledge is used. In complex organizations, the two dimensions interact when auditors are faced with diverse information and interrelated risks. Therefore, professional considerations need to be understood as the result of the interaction of individual capacities and organizational conditions that shape the conduct of audits (Abdollahi et al., 2026; Samagaio & Felício, 2022; Wu et al., 2024).

In the perspective of Bounded Rationality Theory, decision-making takes place within the limitations of cognitive capacity, time, and information that can be processed simultaneously. Auditors are not always able to evaluate all alternatives comprehensively, so it is necessary to determine priorities based on the relevance of the evidence and risk characteristics. Experience can assist in the process of filtering information, while organizational support can expand access to needed knowledge. However, these limitations do not automatically disappear through experience or the division of labor. This theory provides a foundation to explain why differences in individual capacities and assignment conditions can result in variations in auditors' professional judgments (Larmande & Lesage, 2023; Li et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024).

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Experience and expertise affect the auditor's ability to recognize patterns, interpret evidence, and determine issues that require further examination. Differences in experience between personnel can result in variations in understanding of risks, especially when assignments involve complex business conditions. The breadth of industry experience is also related to knowledge that can be used to understand client characteristics. However, experience does not always guarantee the right decision because auditors still need to adapt knowledge to the context of the examination. Thus, professional competence plays a role in shaping the quality of evaluations, but its effectiveness depends on the relevance of experience to the issues at hand (Li et al., 2024; Fu & Xiao, 2026; Niu et al., 2026).

At the organizational level, partner placement and knowledge integration determine how individual expertise is used in audit assignments. Responsibility sharing allows team members to handle aspects of audits according to their competencies, while coordination helps to consolidate findings into a consistent assessment. Conversely, fragmentation of information can make it difficult for auditors to understand the relationships between issues when audits involve multiple domains. Therefore, human resource management is not only about assignment efficiency, but also about the organization's ability to support knowledge exchange. An appropriate work structure is important to help auditors cope with complex audit demands (Wu et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024; Biswas et al., 2026).

Overall, individual and organizational factors shape professional judgments through the interaction between competencies, experience, personal characteristics, and work environment support. Differences in auditor capacity affect the way evidence is understood, while the coordination and organization of resources determine how information is integrated in the audit process. Technological developments also add to the need for adaptability and digital literacy. Therefore, strengthening professional judgment is not enough through the improvement of individual competencies, but also requires a work system that supports the effective use of knowledge. Such interactions become relevant to explain the variation in auditor decisions in complex organizations (Matta & Chamoun, 2025; Fotoh & Mugwira, 2025; Abdollahi et al., 2026).

3. The Relationship of Professional Considerations to Audit Quality in Complex Organizations

The quality of an audit reflects the reliability of the audit in drawing conclusions based on adequate evidence and the evaluation of relevant risks. Professional considerations relate audit procedures to substantive decisions, especially when information is ambiguous or the client's condition gives rise to a wide range of possible interpretations. In complex organizations, auditors need to assess the linkages

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between activities and determine issues that could potentially affect the fairness of financial statements. The accuracy of the process is important because the implementation of procedures alone does not guarantee that all significant risks have been taken into account. Therefore, audit quality is related to the auditor's ability to apply professional judgment in the context of the audit (Larmande & Lesage, 2023; Boyle, 2024; Shen et al., 2023).

The Bounded Rationality Theory explains that auditors' decisions are influenced by limitations in processing all information and evaluating every available alternative. In complex audits, auditors need to sift through evidence, set priorities, and allocate attention to the most relevant issues. Such decisions can support audit quality if priorities are based on adequate risk assessments, but have the potential to create weaknesses when important information is overlooked. Thus, this theory helps explain the relationship between decision-making limitations and the accuracy of audit evaluations. The quality of audits depends on how the auditor manages those limitations under the conditions of the assignment at hand (Larmande & Lesage, 2023; de Inés Antón et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2024).

Materiality determination and risk evaluation are concrete forms of professional consideration related to audit quality. Auditors need to assess the significance of information, determine possible misrepresentations, and choose additional procedures that are appropriate to the characteristics of the entity. Differences in business conditions can cause information that is important to one organization to not have the same level of significance in another. Therefore, the assessment must consider the context and consequences of the information on the financial statements. When prioritization is done inappropriately, the risk of audits may increase or audit resources may be used ineffectively. Contextual considerations are important to support reliable audit conclusions (Shen et al., 2023; de Inés Antón et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2024).

Audit quality is also related to the auditor's ability to identify and communicate significant issues through the disclosure of key audit matters. The disclosure provides information about issues that require special attention, while organizational routines affect the way issues are identified and reported. Differences in the evaluation process can result in variations in the information conveyed to the users of the financial statements. Therefore, professional considerations affect not only internal decisions, but also the clarity of the communication of audit results. The quality of disclosure needs to be understood along with the underlying assessment process, so that the information conveyed can represent important issues in the audit assignment (Cameran & Campa, 2025; Maroun & Duboisée de Ricquebourg, 2024; Wu et al., 2025).

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Overall, the relationship of professional judgment to audit quality is formed through the accuracy of risk evaluation, materiality determination, disclosure of significant issues, and maintenance of independence. Relevant decisions help auditors focus checks on key risks, while evaluation weaknesses can reduce the reliability of conclusions. Technology has the potential to support information processing, but it still requires human judgment to relate the results of the analysis to the evidence and context of the assignment. Thus, audit quality depends not only on the procedures or devices used, but also on the accuracy of professional decisions and the support of oversight systems in complex organizations (Gu et al., 2026; Quick et al., 2024; Fang et al., 2023).

4. Variation in audit quality based on the level of organizational complexity

Organizational complexity refers to the diversity of business activities, relationships between entities, operational structures, and information needs that make up the demands of audits. These differences in characteristics can affect the scope of audits, coordination needs, and the difficulty of obtaining adequate evidence. Organizations with diverse transactions or interrelated business relationships can present different audit problems than entities with simpler structures. Therefore, audit quality needs to be analyzed by considering the characteristics of the organization and the conditions of its assignment. Complexity is an important context for understanding the variation in audit needs, risks faced, and required professional decisions (Ocak et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2025; Chen et al., 2025).

In the perspective of Bounded Rationality Theory, increasing organizational complexity increases the demands on auditors' capacity to process information and determine audit priorities. The large number of activities, business relationships, and sources of information can make it difficult for auditors to evaluate all issues simultaneously. As a result, decisions need to be directed to the information that is most relevant to the risks and objectives of the audit. However, information filtering can result in weaknesses if important relationships are missed or priorities are inappropriately determined. This theory explains why complexity does not automatically lower audit quality, but increases the need for appropriate evaluation, coordination, and attention allocation strategies (Larmande & Lesage, 2023; Shen et al., 2023; Ocak et al., 2021).

The structure of the business relationship can add to the challenges of audits when auditors deal with companies that have affiliations within the same business group. These relationships can affect risk evaluation and create the need to maintain objectivity in assignments. Auditors need to understand the relationships between entities so that the information obtained is not assessed separately from the business context. These conditions demand attention to client relationships, independence,

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and possible conflicts of interest. Therefore, variations in audit quality need to be analyzed by considering the structure of affiliations and the characteristics of the assignment, not just based on the size or number of organizational activities examined (Ocak et al., 2021; Deng et al., 2023; Quick et al., 2024).

The complexity of technology and information also differentiates the demands of audits between organizations. The application of information technology to clients can affect the audit process and resource requirements, while new technological developments require auditors to adjust audit capabilities and procedures. The abundance of data does not always guarantee a more accurate evaluation because auditors still need to determine the relevance of information and assess the reliability of system outputs. Differences in technological readiness and adaptability can result in variations in audit implementation. Therefore, digital complexity needs to be understood through the interaction between system characteristics, auditor competencies, and evaluation processes used to support audit conclusions (Wang et al., 2025; Matta & Chamoun, 2025; Sewpersadh, 2025).

Overall, variations in audit quality based on organizational complexity have to do with business structure, information characteristics, technological readiness, and ability to coordinate audit resources. Complex organizations can increase demands on professional judgment, but their impact on audit quality depends on how auditors manage risks and integrate evidence. Competent personnel support, appropriate division of tasks, and knowledge coordination can help meet these demands. Thus, complexity should be understood as a condition that shapes audit needs and challenges, rather than as a single cause of low quality. Analysis needs to pay attention to the interaction of organizational characteristics and audit capacity (Biswas et al., 2026; Wu et al., 2024; Niu et al., 2026).

CONCLUSION

Based on the synthesis of the literature, auditors' professional judgments play an important role in shaping audit quality, especially when audits take place in complex organizations. Auditors need to evaluate evidence, determine materiality, identify risks, and draw conclusions in the midst of information limitations and assignment demands. In the perspective of Bounded Rationality Theory, professional decisions are influenced by the auditor's ability to process information and determine relevant priorities. Thus, the relationship between professional judgment and audit quality needs to be understood through the interaction between individual capacity, organizational characteristics, and conditions that affect the audit process.

The literature synthesis also shows that experience, expertise, personal characteristics, team coordination, and knowledge integration contribute to shaping

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auditors' professional judgments. Organizational complexity increases the need for risk evaluation and coordination, but does not necessarily lead to a decrease in audit quality as its impact depends on auditors' abilities and organizational support. The study's main contribution is to integrate decision-making limitations with individual and organizational factors to explain variations in audit quality. Therefore, improving audit quality requires professional competence, resource management, and oversight mechanisms that correspond to the complexity of the assignment.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study has limitations in the diversity of focuses, methodological approaches, and indicators used in the articles studied. Some studies discuss the experience and characteristics of auditors, while others focus on materiality, independence, technology, or audit quality. These differences in focus cause the findings to not always be directly comparable. In addition, not all studies measure organizational complexity and professional considerations with the same indicators. This condition limits the drawing of conclusions about the relationship between concepts, so the results of the synthesis need to be interpreted according to the scope and characteristics of the empirical evidence of each study.

Other limitations relate to differences in countries, industries, regulatory environments, and organizational structures in the articles analyzed. These differences can affect the audit process, the availability of information, and the independence of auditors. In addition, the Bounded Rationality Theory is used as a conceptual basis to explain the limitations of decision-making, not as a theory that is directly tested by the entire article. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized uniformly in all audit contexts. Subsequent research needs to pay attention to the characteristics of the assignment environment and clarify the empirical relationship between decision limitations, organizational complexity, and audit quality.

Suggestions

Further research is suggested to examine the relationship between professional judgment, organizational complexity, and audit quality using Bounded Rationality Theory as a conceptual foundation. Research can develop tests regarding time pressures, information diversity, auditor experience, and organizational support in determining audit priorities. In addition, materiality, sensitivity to business risks, knowledge integration, and technology use can be analyzed as factors that explain variations in auditor decisions. Cross-country and industry research is also needed to identify conditions when decision-making limitations have more influence on audit quality.

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For public accounting firms, improving audit quality needs to be directed at developing auditor competencies, placing personnel according to expertise, and strengthening team coordination. Audit procedures should help auditors prioritize significant risks and integrate evidence from various sources. The use of technology also needs to be accompanied by a critical evaluation of the reliability of the information produced. Meanwhile, regulators need to strengthen the oversight, independence, and accountability of the audit process. These efforts are expected to help auditors manage information limitations and deal with organizational complexity more effectively without neglecting the accuracy of professional judgment.

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